

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on February 11 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 14. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on the Bombing of a School in Sudan

February 14, 2000

I am deeply concerned by reports that the Government of Sudan bombed a school in the Nuba Mountain region on February 8, killing and wounding many young children. It is an outrage that such egregious abuses against innocent Sudanese citizens have become commonplace in the ongoing civil war in Sudan, which has claimed over 2 million lives.

The United States calls on the Government of Sudan to cease all aerial bombardment and to refrain from any attacks on civilian targets. We also call for full and immediate access for humanitarian organizations seeking to provide relief to war-ravaged civilians in Sudan.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Technology Industry Leaders and Computer Security Experts and an Exchange With Reporters

February 15, 2000

Internet Security

The President. The room is smaller than it looks on television. [*Laughter*] Usually I don't get so many of them coming in, except you guys are—[*laughter*].

Well, first of all, I want to welcome the leaders of the high-tech industry and experts on computer security to this meeting at the White House to talk about how to maximize the promise and minimize the risks to the Internet.

The disruptions at several websites last week highlight how important the Internet has become to our whole way of life in America and how vulnerabilities at one place on the net can create risks for all. Our administration has been working for years now to

reduce vulnerabilities in Government computers and to encourage the private sector to do more.

We know that we have to keep cyberspace open and free. We have to make, at the same time, computer networks more secure and resilient, and we have to do more to protect privacy and civil liberties. And we're here to work together.

Last month I released a draft plan to help do our part to meet these challenges. And in the budget, I asked Congress for \$2 billion for cybersecurity to safeguard Government networks, to detect attacks, to hire and train more security experts, to increase cooperation with the private sector. I want to jump-start this effort by providing \$9 million right away to begin some of these key initiatives. And so we'll do what we can.

I understand that many leading industry members, including the companies represented here today, have agreed to create a mechanism to share cybersecurity information, and I applaud that. I am asking Secretary Daley and my Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, and Richard Clarke from the White House, to work with these companies to accelerate our efforts with the private sector.

Now, having said that and before we open the floor for questions, I'd like to ask Peter Solvik, who is to my right, the senior vice president and chief information officer of Cisco Systems, to say a few words on behalf of the private sector people who are here today.

Peter.

[*At this point, Mr. Solvik made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, is there such a thing as a plan to actually secure the Internet?

The President. Secretary Daley says there is. [*Laughter*] Let me say, what we're going to try to do today is to talk about what the Government's responsibility is for our own systems and networks, what the private sector's responsibility is, and as I said before, how to talk about having adequate security, how to protect privacy and civil liberties, but also how to keep the Internet open.

And keep in mind, one of the reasons this thing has worked so well is that it has been free of Government regulation. The only contribution the Government made to the Internet was the early research over 30 years ago, now, I guess, is when it started—'69. And there may be more work for us to do in research here. But I think that, insofar as we can, we ought to stay with what brought us here.

The companies and the sector they represent in this room are about 8 percent of our employment. They do represent, as Peter said, over 30 percent of our growth. And so the trick is going to be how to do what needs to be done on security and privacy and still keep it flourishing and growing.

But we ought to approach this with determination, and we shouldn't be surprised that these things have happened. It's just a replay of what has always happened whenever there's a new way of communicating, a new way of making money throughout human society; there's always going to be somebody that tries to take advantage of it. And we'll figure out how to deal with it and go on.

Q. Mr. President, one issue involved here is the sharing of information, and there are some reports this morning that banks were conscious of efforts to disable their systems but did not share that information more broadly. Can the Government solve that without forcing industry or business to disclose information it would rather keep private?

The President. I think—let me tell you what I know about that, and there may be something I don't know, so I will offer that caution at the outset. The Justice Department, the FBI had certain information that they made broadly available, and I think the banks were in better shape to take advantage of that information than others were. And I think one of the purposes of this meeting is to figure what do we do from here forward to make sure that everybody is in the same position.

But I don't think that, based on what I know now, we should be out there finger-pointing at any sector of the economy and what they didn't do. I think that they were just better organized to engage in information sharing and to set up the defenses nec-

essary to guard against this. And what we really want is for every sector of our economy to be in the same position.

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, oil prices have now risen above \$30 a barrel. Does that increase a need to do—is there anything you can do about that? Or are you more sympathetic to arguments toward releasing the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?

The President. I think we have to watch this the next few days. There are going to be some important meetings with the oil producing countries in the next few days, and we will know more about this in a week or 10 days about what the trends are going to be.

But the American people are handling the price increase pretty well in terms of every aspect of our lives because of increased energy efficiency, except for home heating oil, where you have, in the Mid-Atlantic States and New England, unfortunately, so many people still dependent upon a source of heating which the rest of the country left long ago, and they are unbelievably burdened by this.

Now, we've released \$200 million in LIHEAP funds so far. We can release more. But that eases the burden on the poorest of our citizens, but there are a lot of working people on modest incomes that are just getting killed by this because their reliance on home heating oil. And I have not closed off any options. I'm monitoring this on a daily basis. It's a deeply troubling thing.

But I think the rest of our country should know—I mean, a lot of people are feeling the pinch, maybe if they drive long distances, because the price of gasoline has gone up. But there is a group of Americans, middle class and lower middle income Americans, who have limited disposable incomes, who have no option to heat their homes but home heating oil. They're the people that are really getting hurt. And I hope—and obviously, the poor would be devastated by it, but we're monitoring that daily to make sure we've released enough of the Federal funds that we have that go directly to benefit them.

And so this is a daily watch, and we'll just have to see where we are. And I may have

more to say as the days go by. But we should know more in a week about what the trend lines are going to be and what's going to happen to the price of oil over the next few months.

Congressional Subpoenas

Q. Mr. President, did the White House deny congressional committees access to E-mails it subpoenaed?

The President. I believe that we have complied with every request, and there have been thousands. If the American people knew how much of their money we had to spend complying with requests for paper and E-mails, they might be quite amazed. But we certainly have done our best to do that. There has never been an intentional effort to do that, and I think that we are in full compliance. I believe we are. That's what Mr. Podesta told me right before we came out.

Internet Security

Q. Would you entertain one last question, sir? We've always heard for the last 4 or 5 years that it was going to take an electronic Pearl Harbor—many of the people around this table I've interviewed over the last 4 or 5 years, and they've agreed that's the kind of impact we would need for everybody to play together and work together. Is that what happened last week?

The President. Well, I hope not. [*Laughter*] I think it was an alarm. I don't think it was Pearl Harbor. We lost our Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor; I don't think the analogous loss was that great. But I think it—

Q. Was it of concern?

The President. Look, it's a source of concern, but I don't think we should leave here with this vast sense of insecurity. We ought to leave here with a sense of confidence that this is a challenge that was entirely predictable. It's part of the price of the success of the Internet, and we're all determined to work together to meet it. And so, yes, we got an alarm, but I wouldn't say—I wouldn't analogize it to Pearl Harbor.

We're all here. We're going to figure out what to do. But you need to let us work now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his re-

marks, he referred to Richard A. Clarke, Special Assistant to the President and National Coordinator for Transnational Threats, National Security Council. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Peter Solvik. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Actions on Digital Computer Exports

February 15, 2000

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105-85) (the "Act"), I hereby notify you of my decision to establish a new level for the notification procedure for digital computers set forth in section 1211(a) of the Act. The new level will be 12,500 millions of theoretical operations per second (MTOPS). In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(e), I hereby notify you of my decision to remove Romania from the list of countries covered under section 1211(b). I have taken this action based on the recommendation of the Departments of Defense, Commerce, State, and Energy. The enclosed report provides the rationale supporting these decisions and fulfills the requirements of sections 1211(d) and (e) of the Act.

Section 1211(d) provides that any adjustment to the control level described in section 1211(a) cannot take effect until 180 days after receipt of this report by the Congress. Section 1211(e) provides that any deletion of a country from the Tier 3 group cannot take effect until 120 days after the Congress is notified. Given the rapid pace of technological change in the information technology industry, these time periods are too lengthy. I hope that we can work together to reduce both notification periods to 30 days. Such changes will permit implementation of my current decision and future changes in a more timely fashion.